THE SIX SYSTEMS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

A PRIMER

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Foreword

SWAMI Vivekananda has declared that a Hindu does everything religiously—both good and bad things! Religion is in his blood as it were.

But Hinduism is definitely not just a bundle of rituals, dogmas and outward observances only. It has a philosophy behind it, as a strong unshakable foundation, based on the Śrutis or the Vedas and going back to a few milleniums.

Each one of the philosopher sages of hoary antiquity—whether Gautama or Kapila or Jaimini or Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsa—had taught his philosophy based upon the Vedas and his own 'darśana' or realisation, after undergoing severe austerities. In course of time these developed into the now wellknown Ṣaḍdarśanas or Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy.

Though these Six Systems are different in their approaches to the truth, they are unanimous as far as the final goal of humankind is concerned viz., total eradication of suffering and attainment of a

state of eternal peace, as also the means for the same i.e tattvajñāna (knowledge of the truth). We will be justified in calling this as 'The Philosophy' of Hinduism whereas the individual systems, all of which are paths to perfection, can get their respective nomenclatures as the 'Nyāya Darśana,' 'Sāṅkhya Darśana' and so on.

There are quite a few books on this subject of the Six Systems by intellectual giants and master-minds like Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Surendranath Dasgupta and M. Hiriyanna, apart from a host of less known but certainly not less competent, scholars. But they are meant more for the research scholars and serious students of philosophy, studying in the universities.

This primer is primarily meant for the layman of average education who is interested in gaining an elementary knowledge of these systems. If he is satisfied with this attempt, we will feel gratified.

S. H.

Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation

	Sounds like
अ	a-o in son
आ	ā-a in master
इ	i-i in if
ई	ī-ee in feel
उ	u-u in full
ऊ	ū-oo in boot
ऋ	ṛ-somewhat between r and ri
ए	e-ay in May
ऐ	ai-y in my
ओ	o-o in oh
औ	au-ow in now
क	k-k in keen
ख	kh-ckh in blockhead
ग	g-g (hard) in **go**
घ	gh-gh in log-hut
ङ	ṅ-ng in singer
च	c-ch in chain
छ	ch-chh in catch him
ज	j-j in judge
झ	jh-dgeh in hedgehog
ञ	ñ-n (somewhat) as in French
ट	ṭ-t in ten

	Sounds like
ठ	ṭh-th in ant-hill
ड	ḍ-d in den
ढ	ḍh-dh in godhood
ण	ṇ-n in under
त	t-t in French
थ	th-th in thumb
द	d-th in then
ध	dh-the in breathe
न	n-n in not
प	p-p in pen
फ	ph-ph in loop-hole
ब	b-b in bag
भ	bh-bh in abhor
म	m-m in mother
य	y-y in yard
र	r-r in run
ल	l-l in luck
व	v-v in avert
श	ś-sh in reich (German)
ष	ṣ-sh in show
स	s-in sun
ह	h-in hot
ं	ṁ-m in sum
:	ḥ-h in half

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All Paths Lead to Thee!

त्रयी साङ्ख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति
प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ।
रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजुकुटिलनानापथजुषां
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ।।

trayī sāṅkhyaṁ yogaḥ paśupatimataṁ vaiṣṇavamiti
prabhinne prasthāne paramidamadaḥ pathyamiti ca ।
rucīnāṁ vaicitryādṛjukuṭilanānāpathajuṣāṁ
nṛṇāmeko gaṁystvamasi payasāmarṇava iva ।।

Śivamahimnaḥ Stotra, 7

DIFFERENT ARE the paths laid down in the Vedas, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Of these, some people take to one and some to another as the best. Devotees follow these diverse paths, straight or crooked, according to their different tendencies. Yet, O Lord, Thou alone art the ultimate goal of all men, is the ocean of all givers.

1

General Introduction

Need for Philosophy

ONCE an intelligent human being overcomes the ordinary struggles for existence, he is, in all likelihood, turn towards discovering the meaning of life. The result of such attempts is philosophy. Though 'philosophy' means 'love of knowledge', the Indian systems went beyond the concept of knowledge as an intellectual exercise and landed at the door of mystical experience which alone can give, through intuitive perception, a clearer and deeper understanding of the meaning of life. It is this special attitude that got them the appellation 'darśana' ('seeing or experiencing').

Primary Purpose of the Darśanas

Almost all the darśanas discovered to their dismay that in spite of man's best efforts, life is full of misery. Hence how to escape from this misery,

not only today or tomorrow, but for all time to come, became the chief goal of their endeavour.

Methods Adopted

An instinctive urge from within (the still small voice?), an unconscious awareness of one's spiritual dimension, seems to have driven the Hindu philosophers of the now well-known six systems—the Ṣaḍdarśanas—to a search for the meaning of life, by going deep within oneself rather than outside. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (1.1-3) describes beautifully how the savants and the sages that had assembled for an intellectual discussion about the problems of life leading to some definite conclusions and solutions, ultimately had to fall back upon contemplation in solitude to discover the same!

Hence tapas (austerity in personal life) as also śravaṇa (listening attentively to the truths from great savants) and manana (reflecting upon them) have been the chief means adopted by the Hindu philosophers.

Place of Śruti or the Vedas

Since the sages who propagated or reorganised the various darśanas soon found out

the limitations of reasoning—even as that of the human intellect—they naturally turned towards the Śruti or the Vedas—the Book—for enlightenment. The faculty of reasoning which they had discarded as an independent and reliable source of knowledge, was now directed towards the Book, to get a better and clearer understanding of the same!

Since the proof of the pudding lies in its eating, they soon found out that by following the practical disciplines mentioned in the Vedas, they could achieve the state of freedom, freedom from sorrow and suffering.

However, differing interpretations of the Vedas did give rise to different schools which are now standardised as six.

Evolution of the Darśanas

If Hindu tradition is to be believed, all these six systems—Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta—were started by the ṛṣis or sages of hoary antiquity. We come across their names not only in the Vedas but also in the epics and the ancient purāṇas. Their teachings were embodied in works composed in the sūtra-style, (mnemonic statements, extremely laconic) which are easily committed to memory

and orally transmitted for generations. In course of time, as writing became more common, scholar-teachers of these schools produced bhāṣyas and ṭīkās, vṛttis and vārttikas (various types of commentaries and expositions, both in prose and in poetry) embodying the ideas of the school in greater detail. When other schools attacked their teachings, they had to defend themselves vigorously. This attack and counter-attack, based on logic and reasoning, gave rise to a wealth of literature on these schools, going not only deeper into their own subjects but also enriching polemical literature.

Common Factors

In spite of serious differences on the doctrinal side, there is a remarkable harmony and agreement as far as the practical disciplines are considered in these six systems.

Recognition of the presence of human suffering was the starting point for all the systems. Attainment of a state of total freedom from misery called liberation was the final goal.

This can be achieved only through right knowledge. But right knowledge is not just intellectual knowledge but direct and actual experience of one's

real nature as the spirit, the soul, transcending the body-mind complex.

For this, disciplines like leading a strictly moral life, of eschewing the ariṣaḍvargas or the six enemies such as lust, greed and hatred, is a must. In addition there should be a continuous meditation on the truths learnt through philosophical inquiry, until they are realised.

All the systems believe in the law of karma and consider this world as providing us with a moral stage for acting our roles satisfactorily, gradually improving our spiritual fibre.

Finally we can see a sort of gradation in these systems, helping us to progress from lower truths to the Highest Truth, in the Vedānta of Bādarāyaṇa, considered as the pinnacle of Hindu philosophical systems, which can hold its head high even among all the philosophies of the world.

2

Nyāya Darśana

Introduction

Of the six systems of Indian philosophy grouped under the category of Āstika Darśanas (Systems that accept the authority of the Vedas), the Nyāya Darśana of Gotama or Gautama (550 B.C.)—also known as Akṣapāda—comes first. Though it is sometimes coupled with the Vaiśeṣika Darśana of Ulūka or Kaṇāda (600 B.C.) and considered as a unified, or even a single, system, it has its own unique features. Hence it deserves to be treated as a separate and independent school of philosophy.

Almost all the branches of Indian philosophy deal with two subjects: The pramāṇas or valid sources of knowledge, and, the prameyas or things to be known through them.

Since the Nyāya Darśana gives primary importance to the first subject and has developed

it in great detail, it has laid a firm foundation for the science of Indian logic. Hence it has been called Nyāyavidyā, Tarkaśāstra and Ānvīkṣakī also.

Literature

The *Nyāyasūtras* of Gautama is considered as the basic text of this system. It is in five chapters, each of which is again divided into two sections. The total number of sūtras is 528. It has a *bhāṣya* or commentary by Vātsyāyana (A.D. 400). This *Nyāyabhāṣya* has a *Nyāya-vārttika* (a sub-commentary) by one Udyotakara (7th century A.D.). Vācaspati (A.D. 841) has further elucidated this work in his *Tātparyaṭīkā*. The last in this series of commentaries is the *Tātparyaṭīkā pariśuddhi* by Udayana (A.D. 984). His another work is *Kusumāñjalī*. Mention may also be made of the *Nyāyamañjarī* of Jayanta (A.D. 880) and the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśa (A.D. 1200). This last work laid the foundation for a new or modern (and highly advanced) school of Nyāya philosophy, now wellknown as 'Navya-nyāya'. It flourished in Bengal with Navadvīpa as its nerve-centre.

Other important works that need to be mentioned are: The *Tarkasaṅgraha* of Aṇṇambhaṭṭa (A.D. 1650) and the *Kārikāvali* or *Bhāṣāpariccheda*

of Viśvanātha (A.D. 1650) with their own commentaries *Dīpikā* and *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*.

The Sixteen Topics

The Nyāya system enumerates sixteen padārthas or topics and expounds them in detail. A brief summary of the same may now be attempted here.

These sixteen are: pramāṇas (methods of knowing truly), prameyas (objects of the true knowledge), saṁśaya (doubt), prayojana (utility, end in view), dṛṣṭānta (example), siddhānta (doctrine), avayava (member of a syllogism), tarka (logic), nirṇaya (conclusion or final decision), vāda (argument to discover the truth), jalpa (to argue just to win), vitaṇḍā (destructive criticism), hetvābhāsa (apparent, but not valid, reason), chala (unfair reply), jāti (false analogy) and nigrahasthāna (a ground of defeat in debate).

A few of them may now be dealt with very briefly.

The pramāṇas accepted by Nyāya Darśana are four: pratyakṣa (direct perception), anumāna (inference), upamāna (comparison) and śabda (verbal testimony).

The prameyas are: ātman (soul); śarīra (body); jñānendriyas (the five organs of knowledge like the

eyes); viṣayas (objects of these five indriyas like colour or form); buddhi (cognition, jñāna); upalabdhi (apprehension); manas (mind); pravṛtti (activity); doṣa (mental defects such as rāga or attachment and dveṣa or aversion); pretyabhāva (rebirth); phala (result of activities—pleasure and pain); duḥkha (suffering); apavarga (absolute liberation from suffering).

The ultimate aim of a human being is to attain the state of apavarga or mokṣa wherein there is total cessation of all suffering. This is possible only when tattvajñāna or right knowledge about apavarga and other essentials is obtained. This, again, involves the three famous steps as mentioned in some other systems like the Vedānta Darśana, viz., śravaṇa (hearing the scriptures), manana (reflecting on the same) and nididhyāsana (meditation). The various facets of logic and reasoning, given in the long list of the sixteen padārthas like saṁśaya (doubt), dṛṣṭānta (example), tarka (logic), nirṇaya (conclusion) and vāda (argument), are an aid in this process of knowing and understanding the truth correctly.

This leads us to the theory of knowledge as propounded by the Nyāya philosophy.

The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge

Since the reality of an object can be ascertained truly only by the adoption of suitable methods of knowledge, it is very necessary to have a correct understanding of the latter.

The theory of knowledge as propagated by the Nyāya Darśana accepts four pramāṇas or distinct and separate sources of true knowledge. They are:

(1) pratyakṣa (direct perception);

(2) anumāna (inference);

(3) upamāna (comparison); and

(4) śabda (verbal testimony).

It is but proper to emphasize here that these four pramāṇas, when handled correctly, will produce pramā or valid knowledge and not apramā or non-valid knowledge as in the case of smṛti (memory), saṁśaya (doubt) or bhrama (erroneous perception) or a few other already stated as a part of the sixteen padārthas or topics.

Again, valid knowledge is that which corresponds to the true nature of its object.

Let us now take up these four pramāṇas one by one.

(1) *Pratyakṣa* (Direct Perception)

When a sense-organ comes into contact with a sense-object—for instance, the eye seeing a table—

producing a true, clear and unerring knowledge of that object, it can be called pratyakṣa. This precludes indefinite or hazy cognition producing a doubt (as in the case of seeing a distant object like a post and doubting whether it is a man or a post) or clearly perceiving a snake in a piece of rope in insufficient light which is actually an illusion. Both these, though directly perceived, are invalid.

What is internally experienced by the mind, like joy or sorrow, can also be classified under pratyakṣa.

Extra-sensory perception and intuitive perception by highly spiritually evolved. yogis is also included in pratyakṣa. It is called 'yogaja' or 'yogipratyakṣa'.

(2) *Anumāna* (Inference)

Anumāna literally means a cognition or knowledge (= māna) which follows (= anu) some other knowledge.

The stock example given to illustrate this is to draw the inference that there is fire on the yonder hill, by seeing the smoke coming out of it, eventhough the fire itself is not directly seen.

The syllogism of anumāna runs like this:

> There is fire on that yonder hill; because it is emitting smoke. It has been seen elsewhere that wherever there is smoke, there is fire. For instance, in the kitchen.

The Nyāya texts use some technical terms while giving this syllogism. Fire, whose presence has to be proved, is called sādhya (major term). The hill, which is the subject under consideration in the course of inferential reasoning, is called pakṣa (minor term). Smoke which is the mark or sign that indicates the presence of fire is called liṅga (middle term) or hetu or sādhana.

The most important factor in such anumāna or inferential knowledge is that there must be a relation of invariable concomitance—called 'vyāpti' in the technical language of nyāya—between the liṅga and the sādhya.

The knowledge gained from anumāna may be further strengthened by applying the anvaya (agreement in presence) and the vyatireka (agreement in absence) methods. These two (the positive and the negative ways of stating the same truth) are respectively illustrated by

these sentences: Wherever there is smoke, there is fire. Wherever there is no fire, there is no smoke.

While analysing the subject of anumāna, the writers on Nyāya have given several varieties of the same such as svārtha and parārtha or pūrvavat and śeṣavat and so on. However, these subtle distinctions do not serve any practical purpose in life, though they may be resorted to in philosophical disputations.

(3) *Upamāna* (Comparison)

Upamāna has been defined as the process of naming objects through a given description. For example, a man who does not know what a gavaya (wild cow) is, may be told by a forester that it is an animal very similar to the domestic cow. If, subsequently, he happens to see such an animal in a forest, and immediately recognizes it as a gavaya, his knowledge will be due to upamāna.

Some schools of philosophy do not accept upamāna as an independent source of knowledge whereas others consider it as a form of anumāna itself.

(4) *Śabda* (Verbal Testimony)

Śabda or verbal testimony is defined as the assertion of a trustworthy person and is recognised as the last of the pramāṇas.

Śabda may concern dṛṣṭārtha (relating to perceptible objects) or adṛṣṭārtha (relating to imperceptible things).

The latter includes supersensible realities like the scriptural statements about God, soul and immortality. Hence the śruti or the Vedas, are considered as śabda in the highest sense.

Since śabda or verbal testimony is revealed through sentences, the logical structure of a sentence is one of the topics discussed at length in the Nyāya philosophy. The construction of an intelligble sentence must conform to four conditions: ākāṅkṣā (expectancy); yogyatā (mutual fitness, absence of contradictions); sannidhi (suitable proximity between the different words of a sentence); and tātparya (intended meaning).

The Nyāya Theory about the Physical World

The Nyāya Darśana, which perhaps followed the Vaiśeṣika Darśana in the chronological order, has adopted the theory of creation *in toto* from the

latter. The physical world is the product of the four kinds of paramāṇus or atoms of pṛthvī (earth), ap (water), tejas (fire) and vāyu (air). The physical substance ākāśa (ether) and the nonphysical entities of kāla (time) and dik (space) are also involved in the process of creation.

It is Īśvara or God who creates this world out of these material and nonmaterial substances, in accordance with the totality on the adṛṣṭas or karmas of the individual souls.

Īśvara or God

The Nyāya system accepts Īśvara or God as the ultimate cause of sṛṣṭi (creation), sthiti (maintenance) and pralaya (destruction) of the world. However, he does not create the world out of nothing or out of himself, but out of the eternal atoms, space, time, ether, minds and souls.

Here, creation simply means the ordering of the eternal substances, which are coexistent with God, to form into a moral world shaped according to the karmas of the individual souls. The various physical objects serve as a means to the moral and spiritual ends of their lives.

God is thus the first efficient cause (nimittakāraṇa) and not its material cause.

After creation, he also maintains it. He, again, is the moral governor (karmaphaladātā) of the world giving awards to the meritorious and punishing the wicked.

He it is, who destroys the world after the cycle is over and as per the moral exigencies. This he does, by letting loose the forces of destruction.

He is omniscient in the sense that he possesses right knowledge of all things and events.

He is endowed with eternal consciousness as an inseparable attribute. Consciousness is *not* his essence as in the Advaita Vedānta.

He also possesses to the full all the six perfections known as ṣaḍaiśvaryas like jñāna (knowledge), aiśvarya (lordship), yaśas (glory), śrī (wealth and beauty) and so on.

The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika schools give as many as ten reasons for proving the existence of God. However, the most important of them all is that there must be a supremely intelligent agent behind creation wherein almost all the components are inert and the jīvas or the souls are of very limited knowledge and power. The statements in the Vedas—considered as supreme authority in

supra-mundane matters—also support this view.

Jīvas or Individual Souls

According to Nyāya Darśana, the jīvas or individual souls are infinite in number. They are eternal and indestructible. Consciousness is not intrinsic to them but an attribute due to the association with the mind, which is considered atomic in size. The jīvas themselves are vibhu or all-pervading.

A jīva gets all its experiences when its mind is related to the outside world through the sense-organs.

The primary aim of life, according to the Nyāya school, as in other philosophical schools, is the attainment of apavarga or mokṣa, liberation from transmigration. However, unlike the other systems, the Naiyāyikas do not accept that it is a state of positive, unbroken and continuous bliss. It is more a state of negation, of the total and permanent absence of all sorrow and suffering. Since the existence of pain and pleasure is always there in life, and that too, due to the association of the mind with the senses and the objects, there can never be a state of pure pleasure or happiness or bliss

without pain also. This seems to be the logic behind this negative doctrine.

He can get this liberation only by acquiring tattvajñāna or true knowledge that he is the spirit distinct from the body and the mind as also the senses. For this he should undergo the threefold sādhanā (spiritual discipline) of śravaṇa (listening to the spiritual instructions about the ātman or the soul), manana (reflection on the same, establishing that knowledge firmly in the mind) and nididhyāsana (meditation on the ātman in conformity with the final conclusion of the first two modes of sādhanā). This will, in course of time destroy all mithyājñāna or false knowledge. Then the person ceases to be bandied about by passions and impulses which would have led to sorrow, pain and suffering, both physical and mental.

Conclusion

One of the charges generally levelled against the Indian philosophies, especially the six orthodox systems, is that they are based more on the scriptural authority than on sound reasoning and convincing logic. The Nyāya Darśana has more than compensated for this (apparent)

lacuna by its thorough and uncompromising logical methodology.

It has provided a firm basis for the development of vast polemic literature by the later writers of many schools, especially of Vedānta.

3

Vaiśeṣika Darśana

Introduction

The Vaiśeṣika Darśana was founded by Kaṇāda, also known as Ulūka. Hence it is also called Kāṇāda or Aulūkya Darśana. Kaṇāda seems to be a nick-name of Ulūka since he led the life of an ascetic. He used to live on kaṇas or grains gleaned from agricultural fields (kaṇa = grain; ad = to eat).

The basic text is the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* of Kaṇāda. It is divided into ten adhyāyas or books, each adhyāya containing two āhnikas or sections. It has 374 sūtras in all.

The earliest exposition of this work seems to be the *Padārtha-dharma-saṇgraha* of Praśastapāda (5th century A.D.). Though known as *Bhāṣya*, it is not a regular sūtra-by-sūtra commentary on the original work. This *Bhāṣya*, while restating the principles contained in the original sūtras, develops them considerably. The *Nyāyakandalī* of

Śrīdhara (991 A.D.), *Vyomavatī* of Vyomaśiva and *Kiraṇāvalī* of Udayana (A.D.984) are the wellknown commentaries of Praśastapāda. Vallabhācārya's (11th cent. A.D.) *Nyāyalīlāvatī* and Udayana's *Lakṣaṇāvalī* are two valuable compendiums on this system.

The Vaiśeṣika system became closely associated with the Nyāya system in course of time, so much so, that the later writers started dealing with them as if they were one system. Of these, mention must be made of the *Saptapadārthī* of Śivāditya (10th cent. A.D.) and the *Bhāṣāpariccheda* of Viśvanātha (A.D. 1650) with his own commentary, *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*.

The Seven Padārthas

The Vaiśeṣika school of philosophy recognises seven padārthas or categories of realities. 'Padārtha' means 'what is denoted by a word', an object of knowledge. All such objects can be divided into two classes: bhāva (being) and abhāva (non-being). Bhāva stands for all the positive and existent realities whereas abhāva denotes negative facts (*Vaiśeṣikasūtras* 1.1.14).

The saptapadārthas or seven categories are: (1) dravya (substance); (2) guṇa (quality); (3) karma

(action); (4) sāmānya (generality); (5) viśeṣa (particularity); (6) samavāya (relation of inherence), and (7) abhāva (nonexistence).

These may now be considered one by one.

DRAVYA is a substance in which a guṇa (quality) and karma (action) can exist. It is the substratum for both.

There are nine kinds of dravyas: the four elements (earth, water, light and air, respectively called pṛthvī, jala, tejas and vāyu); ākāśa (ether); kāla (time); dik (space); ātman (soul) and manas (mind). All these are eternal.

The four elements exist in the form of paramāṇus (atoms) before creation.

Ākāśa, kāla, dik and ātman are all-pervading whereas manas is aṇu (atomic) in size.

The Vaiśeṣika system accepts two kinds of souls: the jīvātmans and Paramātman (also known as Īśvara or Maheśvara). The former ones or infinite in number whereas Paramātman, the Supreme Soul or God, is only one.

GUṆA or quality is always dependent on dravya or substance for its existence and manifestation. It belongs to a dravya but never to another guṇa.

The Vaiśeṣika system enumerates the guṇas as 24. Some of them are: the five qualities of the five sense-organs, parimāṇa (magnitude), saṁyoga (conjunction), buddhi (cognition), sukha and duḥkha (pleasure and pain), icchā and dveṣa (desire and aversion), saṁskāra (tendency), dharma and adharma (merit and demerit).

This enumeration limiting the guṇas to 24, has been done from the standpoint of their impossibility of further division.

KARMA or action is physical movement. It belongs to a substance and is dynamic in nature. Five kinds of action like utkṣepaṇa (throwing upward) and ākuñcana (contraction) have been listed. They can be perceived by the senses of sight and touch.

Manas or mind too, has movement but it is not perceived externally.

SĀMĀNYA or generality is the essence in a class and can be called the universal. These universals are nitya (eternal) and inhere in the individuals. For example, gotva (cowness) and ghaṭatva (jarness) are present in each individual cow and jar respectively. The death of a cow or the breaking of a jar do not destroy the sāmānya that was in them.

VIŚEṢA or particularity is the direct opposite of the sāmānya. It is the unique individuality of the eternal substances. For instance, one paramāṇu or atom of earth is distinct from another paramāṇu, also of earth. There is something in these atoms which makes them different from one another. That is viśeṣa.

SAMAVĀYA or inherence seems to be a special concept contributed by the Vaiśeṣika philosophy. Saṁyoga or conjunction between two objects can be brought about at will; so also viyoga or disjunction. This relationship between two objects is temporary. But the samavāya relationship is inherent in the substances. (Hence they are called 'ayutasiddha' or related without conjunction.) It is nitya or permanent. The relation by which a whole is in its parts (e.g., the cloth in its threads), a quality like redness in a red object like a red rose, a movement in a moving object (e.g., a moving ball), is samavāya or inherence. The terms related by samavāya are not reversible.

ABHĀVA or non-existence (the last) is the only category of the negative type. it is considered as a reality in this system. When we look at the sky in the night, we recognise the non-existence of the sun there, even as we notice the existence of the

moon and the stars. Broadly speaking, abhāva is of two types: saṁsargābhāva and anyonyābhāva. The former is the absence of something in something else, as the non-existence of a jar on a table. In the latter case, it simply means that one thing is not another thing, as a horse not being present in a buffalo.

Saṁsargābhāva is of three kinds:

(1) prāgabhāva (antecedent non-existence);

(2) pradhvaṁsābhāva or dhvaṁsābhāva (non-existence after destruction); and,

(3) atyantābhāva (absolute non-existence).

Non-existence of the house in the bricks, *before* it is built is the example for prāgabhāva. Non-existence of an earthen jar in the broken pieces, *after* the jar is broken, is the example for pradhvaṁsābhāva. Absence of colour or shape in air is the example for atyantābhāva.

God and the World

The Vaiśeṣika Darśana accepts the existence of God—called Īśvara or Maheśvara—as the Supreme Intelligent Being under whose will and guidance this world is created, sustained and destroyed.

This world is a system of physical things and the living beings which interact with one another. What guides the world is actually the moral order, by which the life and destiny of all the individual souls are governed, the universal law of karma.

The starting point of creation (followed by sustenance and destruction, these three being cyclic and eternal) is the will of God. The first product of his will to create, is the World-soul, Brahmā. He is infilled by God with the six blessed qualities like jñāna, vairāgya and aiśvarya (knowledge, detachment and splendour). It is this Brahmā the chief architect of creation, that proceeds with further creation in accordance with the totality of the adṛṣṭas (the unseen merits and demerits) of the individual souls by setting in motion the paramāṇus or atoms to combine with one another, ultimately resulting in the world.

The process of dissolution is in the reverse order. Brahmā gives up his body. Maheśvara then wills the dissolution and brings about the pralaya or destruction. The whole world is then reduced to its primary state of the seven padārthas.

Conclusion

Like the Nyāya system, the Vaiśeṣika Darśana also is a realistic philosophy which combines pluralism with theism. Creation is not by chance but executed by God in a planned manner, as per the karmas of the individual souls, for the proper realisation of their ultimate moral perfection.

By harmonising the atomic theory with a moral and spiritual outlook on life and accepting God as the creator and moral governor of the world, the Vaiśeṣika system moved nearer towards the Vedānta system which proved to be the pinnacle of Indian philosophy as a whole.

4

Sāṅkhya Darśana

Introduction

AFTER stating his views and defending them with the help of appropriate quotations from the Upaniṣads, Bādarāyaṇa in his *Brahmasūtras* starts his criticisms of other schools with the Sāṅkhya philosophy (2.2.1). While commenting upon the sūtra 1.4.28, Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820) has given the reason as to why the Sāṅkhya system was chosen first. The word he has used ('pradhāna-malla-nibarhaṇa-nyāyena,' 'by the maxim of overcoming the chief wrestler') is very significant. If a wellknown wrestler overcomes the chief wrestler of the opponents' group first, it is as good as all the others also being vanquished, even without fighting them! This shows how important a system Sāṅkhya Darśana is.

As per the orthodox accounts, this system was founded by the sage Kapila (*vide Bhāgavata* 3.25-33). The work that has come down to us, as his,

is the *Sāṅkhyasūtras*. It is obviously a late work. It is in six chapters and contains 526 sūtras in all. Vijñānabhikṣu (16th century A.D.) has written a commentary on the same, known as *Sāṅkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya.*

The Sāṅkhyan tradition of philosophy was nourished and propagated by Kapila's disciple Āsuri and his disciple Pañcaśikha. Some sūtras of Pañcaśikha are found quoted in the *Vyāsabhāṣya* (A.D.) on the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali (200 B.C.). The complete work as such has not yet been found.

By far, the earliest available (and reliable) work on the Sāṅkhya is the *Sāṅkhyakārikās* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa (5th century A.D.). It has 70 stanzas in the aryā metre and hence, sometimes, designated as *Sāṅkhya-saptati* also.

It contains a brief but brilliant and lucid exposition of the doctrines.

This work has two well known commentaries: *Sāṅkhyakārikā-bhāṣya* of Gauḍapāda (A.D. 700) and the *Sāṅkhyatattva-kaumudī* of vācaspati (A. D. 840).

The *Sāṅkhyasāra* of Vijñānabhikṣu and the *Sāṅkhyapravacanasūtravṛtti* of Aniruddha (15th cent. A.D.) are the other works of importance.

Significance of the Name

The origin of the word 'Sāṅkhya' seems to have been an enigma. Some thinkers derive it from saṅkhyā (= number) and opine that it might have got this name since it enumerates the ultimate principles in creation as 25. Others, however, think that since it stresses jñāna or knowledge as the only means of liberation and since 'saṅkhyā' means jñāna (samyak khyāyate), the word fits in very well with the system.

The Pramāṇas or Methods of Knowledge

Unlike many other systems, the Sāṅkhya accepts only three pramāṇas or valid sources of knowledge. They are pratyakṣa (direct perception), anumāna (inference) and śabda (testimony).

Pratyakṣa is the direct cognition of an object through its contact with a sense-organ, like the eyes seeing a table or the ears hearing the chirping of birds. The first contact may give a general knowledge. This is called 'nirvikalpaka' (indeterminate). When, on closer observation and thinking, the perception gives a clearer idea, it is called 'savikalpaka' (determinate). On seeing a table, the first reaction is, 'I am seeing some object.' Then comes a clearer idea, 'This is a wooden table with

a red cloth spread over it.' The first is nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa and the second, savikalpaka-pratyakṣa.

Anumāna or inference is the second source of knowledge. It is gained by seeing some sign first and then inferring the reality behind it. The stock example given by most of the philosophers is, coming to the conclusion that there is fire on a distant hill, by seeing smoke rising out of it. Since our previous experience through direct perception has shown that wherever there is smoke, there is fire, here also we conclude that there is fire, eventhough we do not see it directly. An invariable concomitance between the object seen and the unseen object inferred (here, the smoke and the fire) is a necessary precondition.

Śabda or testimony is the third and the last of the pramāṇas. It is the testimony of a reliable person. This is called laukika-śabda or āptavākya. The Sāṅkhya, however, does not recognise this as a separate pramāṇa since it depends upon the perception and inference of that reliable person. It is the testimony of the Śruti or the Vedas that the Sāṅkhya philosophy admits as the independent and last pramāṇa. The Vedas give us true knowledge about the supersensuous realities, which cannot otherwise be known, by pratyakṣa or anumāna.

The Vedas being apauruṣeya (*not* man-made but divine), are infallible. They embody the intuitions of the great ṛṣis, the enlightened sages.

The Prameyas or the Objects to be Known

Adopting the principle of 'from the seen to the unseen or from the known to the unknown,' Sāṅkhyan metaphysics has reduced all the realities in our experience to two fundamental and eternal substances: the prakṛti (also called pradhāna and avyakta) (the insentient nature, the matrix of all lifeless and unconscious objects); the puruṣa (the being, the conscious self or the soul).

The basic argument behind this conclusion is called 'Satkāryavāda,' the principle that the effect (= kārya) pre-existed (= sat) in the cause (= kāraṇa), before manifestation. For instance, when a pot is prepared out of clay, the pot *already existed* in the clay, though in a potential form. The main logic behind this is that something can never be produced out of nothing.

Applying this argument to the world of our experience where every object is seen to possess three characters—pleasure, pain and indifference—the Sāṅkhya comes to the conclusion that there must be three basic subtle substances from which

these three characters are derived. It calls them as guṇas—sattvaguṇa (producing pleasure or happiness), rajoguṇa (producing pain and suffering) and tamoguṇa (producing neither).

Each of these guṇas stands for a distinct aspect of physical reality. Sattva signifies whatever is pure and fine, and, conduces to the production of knowledge as also happiness. Rajas is ever active. It is also responsible for desires and ambitions, to fulfil which, one has to actively work. Tamas is stolid and offers resistance. It tends to sleep and inactivity.

These three guṇas always exist together and can never get separated. When these three—which are ever in turmoil as it were—are in a perfectly balanced state, not interfering with one another, though ever active or in perpetual motion within themselves, constitute the prakṛti or pradhāna. In other words, prakṛti is none other than these three guṇas in a state of perfect balance.

This prakṛti is the basic material, primal matter, from which the universe evolves. It is 'jaḍa,' i.e., it has no consciousness.

The puruṣa (the soul) on the other hand is a conscious entity; nay, consciousness is his very

essence. He is eternal, ever pure, ever detached (asaṅga) and all-pervading. There are innumerable puruṣas or souls, as many as the living beings.

Evolution of the World

The creation or evolution of the world has its starting point in the saṁyoga or effective contact between the puruṣa and the prakṛti. The totality of the karmas (unseen deserts) of the puruṣas disturbs the balance of the guṇas in prakṛti and sets in motion the process of evolution.

Since prakṛti is jaḍa (lifeless and devoid of consciousness) and the puruṣa is asaṅga (absolutely unattached) how can they ever co-operate in this process of creation? Such co-operation is possible even as a blind man and a lame man can team together to come out of a forest, the blind one carrying the lame person who can now direct him on the right road!

Another example given by the Sāṅkhyas is that of the spontaneous flow of milk from the udder of the mother cow when its calf is nearby.

The process of evolution from prakṛti is as follows: As a result of the guṇas mixing with one another, the first evolute coming out of the prakṛti

is the mahat or the buddhi (the cosmic intellect). From that emerges ahaṅkāra (cosmic ego, the principle of individuation). From the sāttvik part of ahaṅkāra evolve manas (cosmic mind), the five jñānendriyas (cosmic organs of knowledge like the eyes and the ears) and the five karmendriyas (cosmic organs of action like the hands and the feet). From the tāmasik part of ahaṅkāra are produced the five tanmātras (subtle elements of earth, water etc.) and from them, further, evolve the five mahābhūtas or gross elements (of earth, water, fire, air and ether).

In all, including the prakṛti, there will now be 24 cosmic principles or elements. The rest of creation takes place by their permutation and combination, each puruṣa getting involved with a psycho-physical complex (body) as per his karma.

Bondage and Liberation

It is interesting to note here that according to the Sāṅkhyan metaphysics the very purpose of the evolution of the prakṛti into this world is to give the puruṣa one more chance for liberation. Again, it is the same prakṛti and its evolute, the world, that binds him once more!

The main cause of bondage of the puruṣa and his consequent suffering in the world is aviveka (ignorance, non-discrimination between himself as pure consciousness and prakṛti which is jaḍa, the unconscious entity). It is this that is leading him from birth to death, or from life to life *ad infinitum*.

The question as to how and when he got into this mess can never be answered, except by stating that it is anādi (beginningless) but sānta (has an end).

Since aviveka or ignorance is responsible for this bondage, kaivalya or liberation can come only from vivekakhyāti or right knowledge. 'Khyāti' means knowledge (in the sense of direct experience) and 'viveka' means separating himself as the puruṣa, the pure conscious entity, from the prakṛti, the insentient matter. This can be attained by following the eight steps of yoga wherein the puruṣa or the soul is the object of meditation.

The Sāṅkhya Darśana accepts two kinds of liberation: jīvanmukti and videhamukti. the former is attained even while living here, the body continuing to live for some more time, till the prārabdhakarma (the karma that was responsible for starting this life) is exhausted. In this state, the

perfect man continues to live in the world, though not of the world.

The final liberation comes *after* the death of the body—that is why it is called 'videhamukti'—and the person will never come back to this mundane world. He will attain the state perfectly free from all pain and suffering, though there is no experience of bliss. However, since caitanya or consciousness is his essence, he will ever remain in his own state.

5

Yogadarśana

Introduction

Indian philosophical systems are known as 'darśanas.' Unlike the Western philosophical systems, they do not depend solely on logic and reasoning, but on 'darśana' or 'seeing' or 'experiencing' the truth, in mystical states. Hence the appropriateness of the term. The darśanas have been classified into two groups: the āstika and the nāstika. Those that are based on the authority of the Vedas are called 'āstika' and the rest are 'nāstika.' The Cārvaka (Materialism), the Jaina and the Bauddha systems come under the latter category and, the Ṣaḍ-darśanas or the six traditional systems of Hindu philosophy, under the former.

The six traditional systems are: Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta. They generally deal with four topics: existence and nature of Brahman or Īśvara or God; nature of the

jīva or the individual soul; creation of jagat or the world; mokṣa or liberation as also the disciplines that lead to it.

Sāṅkhya and Yoga Darśanas

The word 'Sāṅkhya' has been derived from 'saṅkhyā,' which means jñāna or knowledge. Since the Sāṅkhya system of the sage Kapila declares jñāna as the sole or primary means of attaining mokṣa—called 'kaivalya' in this system—it has been designated as 'Sāṅkhya-darśana'. 'Sāṅkhyā' also means 'number'. Since this system has fixed the *number* of the basic cosmic principles as 24 + 1, it might have earned this appellation for itself.

The Sāṅkhya system accepts only puruṣa (the individual soul) and pradhāna or prakṛti (nature) as the fundamental realities and does not accept Īśvara or God. Hence it is sometimes called 'Nirīśvara-Sāṅkhya', ('Sāṅkhya without Īśvara'). The Yogadarśana which accepts all the principles of the Sāṅkhya and also Īśvara or God, in addition, has been designated as 'Seśvara-Sāṅkhya' ('Sāṅkhya with Īśvara').

In the Sāṅkhya system, tattvajñāna or enquiry into the nature of truth is of primary importance. But the Yoga system deals primarily with sādhanās

or spiritual disciplines. That is why the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali, the basic text of the Yoga system, begins with the words *atha yogānuśāsanam*, ('Now, the teaching of Yoga [is begun].') instead of the words, 'jijñāsā' or 'mīmāṁsā' ('enquiry').

What is Yoga?

The word 'yoga' can be derived from two verbal roots: yuj (to yoke) or yuj (to concentrate). Hence 'yoga' is that which helps a jīva or the individual soul to attain concentration on Īśvara and ultimate union with him.

The word 'yoga' in its several senses has been used in the *Ṛgveda* (5.81.1) and some of the Upaniṣads like the *Kaṭha* (6.10,11; 2.12) and the *Śvetāśvatara* (1.3). The *Bhagavadgītā* (6.11, 13, 20 and 35) contains many ideas which appear to reflect the teachings of the *Yogasūtras* (c.f. 2.46; 1.2; 1.12). It is likely that there might have been a more ancient work on Yoga attributed to Hiraṇyagarbha, and this could have influenced other works.

The Author and His Times

Hindu tradition attributes the origin of the science of Yoga to Hiraṇyagarbha, an aspect of God

himself. Two sages—Sanatkumāra and Jaigiṣavya—are sometimes stated to be the authors of Yogaśāstra. However, their works have not been traced till now.

Among the works on Yoga available now, the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali seems to be the most ancient one. Whether the Patañjali who wrote the bhāṣya or commentary on the sūtras of Pāṇini and the Patañjali of the *Yogasūtras* are the same or not, has not been conclusively established. A work on Āyurveda, also attributed to him, has not been traced so far.

Scholars opine that Patañjali might have lived during the period 200 B.C.—A.D. 300.

The Work

Like the other works of the six darśanas, Patañjali's treatise also is in the form of sūtras. A sūtra is a brief mnemonic statement with a minimum of letters, but expressing a vast amount of knowledge.

The *Yogasūtras* comprises 195 sūtras spread over four pādas or chapters. They are: *Samādhipāda* (sūs. 51); *Sādhanapāda* (sūs. 55); *Vibhūtipāda* (sūs. 55) and *Kaivalyapāda* (sūs.34).

A Sūtra work, by its very nature, is ambiguous, if not obscure, and hence needs a commentary

to unravel it. Fortunately for us, the work *Yogasūtras* has attracted the attention of a number of savants who have enriched the yoga literature by their learned commentaries and sub-commentaries.

The *Bhāṣya* of Vyāsa is regarded as the basic commentary honoured by almost all the later writers. This Vyāsa, considered to be different from the traditional Vedavyāsa, lived perhaps during the period A.D. 400.

The following are the glosses on this *Vyāsabhāṣya*:

Tattvavaiśāradī of Vācaspati Miśra (A.D. 850);

Yogavārttika of Vijñānabhikṣu (16th cent.);

Bhāsvatī of Hariharānanda Araṇya (19th cent.)

There is one *Yogabhāṣyavivaraṇa* attributed to Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820). Whether the work is really that of the famous teacher of Advaita Vedānta or not, scholars do not seem to agree. The style of writing and the presentation, as also the belief that Śaṅkara was a great yogi, lends some support to the view that he is the author of this work.There are at least six commentaries written directly on the *Yogasūtras*. They are:

Rājamārttāṇḍavṛtti of Bhojadeva(11th cent.);

Yogasūtrapradīpikā of Bhāvāgaṇeśa;

Yogasūtravṛtti of Nagojibhaṭṭa;

Yogamaṇiprabhā of Rāmānanda Yati;

Yogasiddhāntacandrikā of Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha and *Yogasudhākara* of Sadāśiva Brahmendra 18th cent.).

Philosophy of the Yogasūtras

Though the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali is primarily a work heavily oriented towards sādhanā or spiritual practice, a basic knowledge of its Sāṅkhyan background is necessary to understand it.

Yogadarśana accepts three fundamental realities: Īśvara, puruṣas and pradhāna or prakṛti.

Puruṣas are the individual souls. They are cidrūpa or of the nature of consciousness and are infinite in number.

The existence of Īśvara, called 'Puruṣaviśeṣa' ('special or unique puruṣa') can be known only through the scriptures. He is sarvajña or omniscient. Being untouched by the shackles of prakṛti he is ever free. He is the ādiguru, the primeval teacher. He is designated by praṇava or Om. It is by his will and in accordance with the karmas of the puruṣas that prakṛti, comprising the three

guṇas sattva, rajas and tamas, evolves into this universe. The evolutes of prakṛti are mahat (cosmic intellect), ahaṅkāra (the ego-principle), manas (cosmic mind), the tanmātras (subtle elements) and so on, just as in the Sāṅkhyan system.

The puruṣa or the individual soul, somehow—due to avidyā or nescience—forgets his real nature as pure consciousness, gets involved with the evolutes of prakṛti and suffers all the pangs of birth, death and transmigration. However, when he performs sādhanās—the aṣṭāṅgas or the eight steps of yoga—he once again realises his essential nature and is instantly freed from saṁsāra, the cycle of transmigration. Being established in oneself, thus transcending saṁsāra, is called 'kaivalya'.

Yoga as 'Cittavṛttinirodha'

Patañjali defines yoga as *cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* (1.2). When all the vṛttis or modifications of the citta or the mind are controlled and suppressed (= niruddha), the true nature of the puruṣa or the Self, is revealed. Citta is the mind-stuff that is variously called as antaḥkaraṇa (the inner instrument), manas (the mind) or buddhi (the intellect). The waves of thoughts, feelings and emotions that arise in it due to the impact of the sense-objects

upon it through the sense-organs like the eyes and the ears, are called 'cittavṛttis.' Though these cittavṛttis appear to be innumerable, they can be classified under five groups: pramāṇa (means of right knowledge), viparyaya (false-knowledge), vikalpa (mental picture based on hearing a word), nidrā (sleep) and smṛti (memory).

Pramāṇa is the means of right knowledge. The pramāṇas are three: pratyakṣa (direct perception), anumāna (inference) and āgama (words of reliable persons and the scriptures).

Viparyaya is false knowledge as that of a snake in a rope in semi-darkness.

Vikalpa is the mental picture that arises on hearing a word or words like 'Rahu's head' (Rahu, the malefic planet has only the head and no other part of the body).

Nidrā or sleep is that condition of mind where its modifications arise out of a preponderance of tamas.

Smṛti is the memory of previous experiences.

These cittavṛttis when they produce kleśa or suffering to the puruṣa due to avidyā (ignorance), asmitā (egoism) and so on, are called kliṣṭa. When they help the puruṣa to free himself from them, they become 'akliṣṭa'.

The citta or the mind has five states: Kṣipta (impulsive), mūḍha (dull), vikṣipta (distracted), ekāgra (one-pointed) and niruddha (inhibited). Yoga is not possible in the first three states since the mind is in the grip of rajas and tamas. When sattva predominates, the mind can attain one-pointedness leading it to samprajñāta-samādhi (state of perfect concentration where there is a clear cognition of the object). In the last, the niruddha, state there is a total suppression of all modifications, leading to asamprajñāta-samādhi, where no object is cognized and the puruṣa remains established in his intrinsic state. Then he becomes a mukta, a liberated soul, freed from all the trammels of prakṛti.

Obstacles to Yoga

Patañjali calls the obstacles to yoga as 'antarāyas' ('that which comes in between') and lists them as nine (1.30): vyādhi (illness), styāna (apathy), saṁśaya (doubt), pramāda (heedlessness), ālasya (laziness), avirati (lack of renunciation), bhrāntidarśana (misconception), alabdhabhūmikatva (failure to attain yogic states) and anavasthitatva (instability in the state).

Illness has to be remedied by medical treatment. Apathy has to be overcome by exercising

willpower. Doubt must be countered by faith in the scriptures and the preceptor. Heedlessness must be abolished by eternal vigilance. Laziness should be conquered by healthy activity. Lack of renunciation should be nullified through viveka (discrimination) and vairāgya (detachment). The last three obstacles must be tackled as per the advice of a competent preceptor.

Patañjali adds five more obstacles to yoga (1.31) since they too distract the mind. They are: duḥkha (pain), daurmanasya (frustration), aṅgamejayatva (restlessness of the limbs of the body), śvāsa and praśvāsa (spasmodic breathing in or out). They also have to be countered by appropriate remedies.

Some Practical Hints

Patañjali gives quite a few suggestions which help an aspirant to ward off the obstacles to yoga and attain greater concentration, ultimately leading to samādhi or mystical experience of the self. Out of these, vairāgya (detachment or the spirit of renunciation) and abhyāsa (constant practice) come first (1.12). The former helps one to take the mind away from the sense-objects whereas the latter leads it towards the Self or God.

Other hints given are: an attitude of friendship (maitrī) towards those who are happy (instead of feeling jealous of them); compassion (karuṇā) towards those who are suffering; controlling the prāṇic energy by regulating the breath; meditating on the light in the centre of one's heart; contemplating on the minds of great persons; repeatedly remembering highly elevating dreams if one had had them; and contemplating on the forms of gods and goddesses or planets like the moon or the psychic centres in one's own body.

All these methods help the spiritual aspirant to gain peace of mind as also greater control over it.

Aṣṭāṅgas or Eight Steps

The puruṣa or the jīvātman (individual soul) is in bondage because of his inordinate attachment to his body-mind complex, which is a product of prakṛti. The aim of yoga is 'viyoga' (separating) of the puruṣa from the clutches of prakṛti. This comes about by vivekakhyāti or the knowledge that prakṛti and puruṣa are essentially separate from each other (khyāti = knowledge; viveka = discrimination).

The *Yogasūtras* prescribes a graded discipline comprising eight steps, called the 'aṣṭāṅgas' of yoga. They are: yama (restraint), niyama (observances),

āsana (posture), prāṇāyāma (control of vital currents), pratyāhāra (state of withdrawal), dhāraṇā (concentration), dhyāna (meditation) and samādhi (total absorption). Out of these, the first five are considered as 'bahiraṅgas' (external aids) and the last three as 'antaraṅgas' (internal aids) to yoga.

Ahiṁsā (non-injury), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (continence) and aparigraha (non-acceptance of gifts) constitute yama, the first step.

Niyama includes śauca (cleanliness), santoṣa (contentment), tapas (austerity of body, speech and mind), svādhyāya (study of holy books and repetition of mantras like Om), and Īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to God).

The former contribute to social harmony and the latter to personal purity. The three disciplines of tapas, svādhyāya and īśvarapraṇidhāna are grouped together by Patañjali and christened as 'kriyāyoga'. It is effective as a shortcut to yoga.

Āsana is that posture in which one can sit steadily and comfortably for the practice of yoga. Prāṇāyāma is controlling the vital airs in the body, through the regulation of breathing. When the sense-organs are withdrawn from the sense-

objects they remain merged as it were, in the mind. This is called pratyāhāra.

The next three disciplines—dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi—are actually three continuous steps of the same process. In dhāraṇā, the mind is fixed on the object of concentration. When this concentration becomes uninterrupted, like the oil being poured from one vessel into another, it is dhyāna. When dhyāna ripens into a state of total absorption on the object, so much so, that the aspirant is not aware of even his own existence, it is called samādhi. Samādhi can be attained by īśvarapraṇidhāna or devotion to God also (1.23).

Patañjali terms these three steps together as 'saṁyama'. And, this saṁyama should always be on one and the same object.

Yogasiddhis

The belief that one can attain supernatural powers by tapas and by the grace of God is very ancient. Patañjali describes quite a few of such powers in the second and the third chapters in order to generate faith in the minds of the ordinary seekers of truth. For instance, he declares that while in the company of a person who is well-established in the virtue of ahiṁsā, even animals

inimical to one another (like a tiger and a cow) will live in peace and mutual harmony. The words of a person rooted in satya will be infallible. One who observes aparigraha very strictly can get a knowledge of his past and future lives (*vide* 2.35, 36 and 39).

Saṁyama on different objects will endow the yogi with several occult powers. For instance, by saṁyama on the five elements like pṛthvī (earth) and ap (water), the yogi can get aṣṭasiddhis or the eight fold powers like aṇimā (power to become atomic in size), mahimā (power to grow to any large size) and so on (3.44,45). Some of the other powers given in the work are: thought-reading, disappearance from view, getting enormous strength, understanding the language of animals and other creatures, and so on.

However, Patañjali, who as a scientist of mind, describes these powers (since they are part of the science), also cautions the aspirant of yoga not to seek them. The temptation for these powers can lead him away from the goal of his life, viz., kaivalya or liberation. But, after the attainment of kaivalya—since he may continue to live for some more time due to prarabdhakarma (the karma that has started

this life)—he will have those powers and can safely use them for the good of mankind.

Conclusion

The Yogadarśana is not only ancient but also very practical. Even the Vedāntic systems accept its sādhanā aspects. Modern psychologists too are discovering its utility in guarding or in regaining mental health. Methods and techniques of yoga are becoming quite popular all over the world. The first two steps—yama and niyama—can contribute to the well-being of the individual as well as of the society. The various āsanas—better known as yogāsanas—can help in regaining or maintaining one's health. Thus the Yoga system is gradually gaining universal acceptance.

6

Mīmāṁsā Darśana

Introduction

If there is any system of Hindu philosophy where the Book becomes more important than the Maker of the Book, it is the Mīmāṁsā. Also called Pūrvamīmāṁsā Darśana, it primarily aims at giving a methodology of interpretation with the help of which complicated Vedic injunctions regarding rituals may be understood and given effect to.

Vedic ritualism believes that:

(1) there is a soul which survives the death of the body and enjoys the fruits of the rituals in heaven;

(2) there is a śakti or power of potency which preserves the effects of the rituals performed;

(3) the Vedas are infallible;

(4) this world is real;

(5) our life and actions performed here are real and not mere dreams.

Basic Works

The *Mīmāṁsāsūtras* of Jaimini (B.C. 200) is the basic text of this system. It is a voluminous work comprising more than 2500 aphorisms divided into 12 chapters and 60 sub-sections in all.

The *Bhāṣya* of Śabara Svāmin (57 B.C. or A.D. 200) gives the most authoritative interpretation of the sūtras. Śabara's *Bhāṣya* has two interpretations. The *Bṛhatī* of Prabhākara (A.D. 650) still in the manuscript form, is the first. The second is by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (A. D. 700) in three parts: *Ślokavārttika*, *Tantravārttika* and *Ṭupṭīkā*. *Prakaraṇapañcikā* of Śālikanātha (a pupil of Prabhākara), *Śāstradīpikā* of Pārthasarathi (A.D. 900), *Nyāyamālāvistara* of Mādhava Vidyāraṇya (A.D. 1350) and *Arthasaṅgraha* of Laugākṣi Bhāskara (17th cent. A.D.) are some of the other works of this system.

Theory of Knowledge

To justify the supreme authority of the Vedas, the Mīmāṁsā Darśana has developed an elaborate epistemology which has been accepted

by other schools also, especially the Vedānta Darśana.

For knowledge to be valid, three conditions have to be fulfilled. They are:

(1) It should yield some new information previously unknown.

(2) It should not be contradicted by any other knowledge.

(3) The conditions which generate that knowledge should be free from defects.

The Mīmāṁsā admits of two kinds of knowledge: pratyakṣa (immediate) and parokṣa (mediate).

The latter, again, is of five kinds: anumāna (inference), upamāna (comparison), śabda (verbal testimony, also called 'āptavākya' (words of a reliable person), arthāpatti (postulation) and anupalabdhi (non-perception).

These may now be briefly described.

PRATYAKṢA (direct or immediate perception) has two stages of development. As soon as the sense-organ comes into contact with the sense object, there is a general awareness of it, as something existing. This is called nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa.

In the next stage, all the details will be noted in the light of past experience. This is savikalpa-pratyakṣa.

ANUMĀNA (inference) gives us the knowledge of a thing indirectly, when we see some liṅga or sign invariably connected with the original. For instance, by seeing smoke on a yonder hill, we can infer that there is fire there (eventhough we do not see it directly) since it is known from previous observations and experience that smoke is invariably associated with fire.

UPAMĀNA (Comparison) is another source of knowledge. On seeing a rat, one recollects that it is like the mouse he had seen earlier. He then comes to know that the remembered mouse is like the perceived rat. This type of knowledge comes through upamāna.

ŚABDA (verbal testimony) is the next source of knowledge. The Mīmāṁsā Darśana pays the greatest attention to this since it has to justify the undisputed authority of the Vedas.

The words of a reliable person are believed to be true. This is called āptavākya.

Verbal testimony, however, is of two types: pauruṣeya (personal, same as āptavākya) and apauruṣeya (impersonal). The second denotes the

Vedas since they were not created by any human agency. The Vedas are supremely authoritative since they are the 'Book of Commandments' and also give us authentic knowledge of the unseen and the unknown truths. Again, their main purport and purpose lies in propagating sacrificial rites.

The Vedas are eternal, not as the printed Book nor as the orally transmitted mantras but as the eternal teachings contained in them. These teachings are conveyed through the ṛṣis or sages in every age.

Since the Vedas are mainly concerned with giving commands (= vidhi) about the yāgas or sacrificial rites and other associated rituals, only those sentences containing such commands as expressed through the verbs couched in 'vidhiliṅ' (imperative mood as in 'svargakāmo yajeta', 'One desirous of attaining heaven should sacrifice!') and other forms should be taken as authoritative and others as aids to it. Such verbs have an innate power of urging the hearer to do the sacrifice. This is called 'bhāvanā'. The urge contained in the Vedic words is known as 'śābdībhāvanā' (śabda = word). On hearing it, the person who hears it, gets the urge to perform it. This secondary urge is named 'ārthībhāvanā' (artha = utility, useful activity).

All this depends upon the correct understanding and interpretation of the Vedic sentences. For this, the Mīmāṁsā gives six steps: a) upakrama (beginning); b) upasaṁhāra (concluding); abhyāsa (repetition for the sake of emphasis); c) apūrvatā (not being known earlier by any other means); phala (utility); arthavāda (mere eulogy) and upapatti (logic and reasoning).

Once the correct meaning is thus ascertained, the command can be implemented.

ARTHĀPATTI (postulation or presumption) is the necessary supposition of an unperceived fact which alone can explain an anomaly satisfactorily. For instance, if a person is noticed to be getting fat eventhough he does not eat during the day, it can safely be presumed that he is secretly eating at night! Knowledge obtained by arthāpatti is distinctive since it cannot be got by any other means.

ANUPALABDHI (non-perception) has also been accepted as a source of knowledge since it gives the immediate cognition of the non-existence of an object. If it is found that a jar which had been kept on a table earlier, is not perceived *now*, its nonexistence is cognized.

Since the validity of knowledge that we get is an important aspect of our life giving rise to necessary activities, this has been discussed in detail by the writers of Mīmāṁsā works.

Incidentally, they also discuss how errors creep in, giving their own explanations and theories. This has led to two different views.

When a snake is perceived in a rope in dim light, though the rope seen *now* and the snake seen in the *past* are *both* real, a mixing up takes place due to a lapse of memory giving rise to a reaction of fear. This is called *akhyātivāda* (denial of illusory perception).

In the second view known as *viparītakhyātivāda*, the error consists in wrongly relating two really existing, but separate, entities.

Metaphysics

(a) The World

Unlike some other systems (like Advaita Vedānta) the Mīmāṁsā believes in the reality of the world, with all the myriad objects in it. This world, according to it, comprises the living bodies including the various indriyas or the sense-organs, wherein the souls reside temporarily to reap the

effects of their karmas, good or bad. The various objects of the world serve as the fruits to be suffered or enjoyed.

(b) The Soul

There are infinite number of souls. They are eternal but undergo transmigration due to their karmas (good or bad deeds) performed when encased in real bodies in a real world.

The soul has no consciousness of its own. Consciousness rises in it due to association with the mind, the sense-organs and the sense-objects, especially when the organs come into contact with their respective objects. This is proved by the absence of consciousness in the deep-sleep state.

When a person performs Vedic sacrifices like Jyotiṣṭoma, say to get to heaven, the potential effect of it in a subtle form resides in his soul and will give its fruit after death. This potential imperceptible power or śakti, is called 'apūrva'.

Since the whole of the Vedas are meant to urge the human beings to perform karmas (Vedic rituals), every human being is bound to do his duty for duty's sake. A ritual is to be done, only because

the Vedas *command* it and *none* has the choice not to do it or do it in a different way!

Such duties are classified into two broad groups: nitya or daily obligatory duties and naimittika or occasional (but obligatory) duties. These help in the purification of the soul through moral improvement.

(c) Mokṣa or liberation

The highest good (niśśreyasa) for a person is to get mokṣa or liberation, total cessation of transmigratory existence. In this state the soul is permanently free from all pain and suffering though there is no consciousness or bliss!

The ultimate goal of life was, probably, according to the earlier conception of the Mīmāṁsā, the attainment of unalloyed bliss in heaven. However, the available literature does not support it.

How to attain mokṣa?—is a question that has been answered in a rather simplistic way. Not performing kāmyakarmas or desire-motivated actions will not cause rebirth. Sins committed unwillingly can be offset by the performance of the various prāyaścittas (expiatory rites). Performance of nitya and naimittika karmas will bring about cittaśuddhi or purity of mind whereas their non-

performance will result in pratyavāyadoṣa or the error of omission, proving to be an obstacle in the path of mokṣa. Prārabdhakarma (karma that has caused this birth) is exhausted by experience in this life. So, when the body falls, there is no residual factor that can bring the soul back to this world once again. Consequently liberation is attained automatically.

(d) Īśvara or God

Another question that is discussed and discarded by the Mīmāṁsā system is whether Īśvara or God exists or not. Since all the materials that make up the physical world are eternally existing and since the adṛṣṭas or the karmas of the souls impel these materials in the process of creation, there is no need to accept any God as the agent or author of creation.

Epilogue

It is rather strange that a system that champions the supremacy of the Vedas goes to the extent of enthroning the Book as God, and, dethrone and abandon its maker! Let alone God, even the various deities like Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa who are invoked in the sacrificial rites to receive

the offerings, are treated more like the imaginary characters of a fictitious drama.

It may not be wrong to declare that by over-emphasizing the means to the detriment of the end, the Mīmāṁsā dug its own grave as a living system of philosophy.

However, an earnest study of its theory of knowledge as also its method of interpreting the Vedic sentences will be of great help in understanding the Vedāntic systems better.

7

Vedānta Darśana

Preamble—Sūtras

The system of education in ancient India required the students to live in the campus of a forest academy along with the teachers. The teaching imparted was, almost always, in the form of sūtras or aphorisms, followed by explanations and discussions. At a time when committing things to memory was considered supremely important, this method suited admirably.

The sūtra literature is a class by itself. As per the norms set for a sūtra, it should be 'alpākṣara' (consisting of minimum number of letters), 'asandigdha' (without doubt as regards the meaning), 'sāravat' (must contain the essence of the subject) and yet, 'viśvatomukha' (reflect all aspects of the same). However, in their anxiety to economise the words, the composers of the sūtra-works seem to have so overdone it that bhāṣyas or

explanatory commentaries by later writers became necessary.

The śrauta, the gṛhya and the dharma sūtras form the earliest bunch of sūtra literature. The darśanas or the philosophical systems which are of a later period, followed this sūtra model since it served their purpose well.

Vedānta Darśana

Out of the six darśanas or systems of philosophy which accept the authority of the Vedas (the basic scriptures of Hinduism), the last two—the Mīmāṁsā and the Vedānta systems—are directly connected with them. Whereas the former tries to reconcile the various Vedic texts that seem to give different directions with regard to the same ritual system, the latter attempts to make out a coherent philosophy of Brahman (God, the Absolute) from the apparently conflicting statements in the Upaniṣads.

Prasthāna-traya

The Vedānta system, as its very name implies, deals with the Upaniṣads which are the end-portions (anta = end) of the Vedas and also contain the essence (anta = core or essence) of the same.

The system itself is based on three canonical works: the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. The Upaniṣads are called 'śrutiprasthāna,' the *Brahmasūtras*, 'nyāya-prasthāna' and the *Bhagavadgītā*, 'smṛti-prasthāna,' the three together being termed 'prasthānatraya'. 'Prasthāna' means a school of philosophy or religion.

The Upaniṣads

Though a very large number of works going by the name 'Upaniṣad' are available in print today, orthodox tradition accepts only a handful of them—twelve to fourteen—as ancient and authoritative. The entire edifice of the Vedānta system of philosophy depends upon these few Upaniṣads.

The teachings of these Upaniṣads may, broadly speaking, be classified as follows: Brahman as the ultimate cause of this world, nature of Brahman, evolution of this world and its character, nature of the living beings as individual souls, their relationship with Brahman, their involvement in this world as well as their transmigration, the final goal of life, the disciplines that help in reaching that goal and the nature of attainment of that final goal.

It is a fact that the Upaniṣads, as extant today, do not give a coherent picture of these various subjects discussed in them. Since tradition and orthodoxy deem the entire body of the Upaniṣads as one canonical scripture—the Śruti—it became necessary to reinterpret and reorganise their teachings so as to give them a more coherent look. It was exactly this that Bādarāyaṇa attempted and the result was the *Brahmasūtras*.

The Brahmasūtras

The work derives its name from the fact that it deals chiefly with Brahman (God, the Absolute) as described in the Upaniṣads, in all its aspects. It is also known by other names as follows:

(a) The *Vedānta-sūtras*, since the subject matter is that of Vedānta or the Upaniṣads;

(b) The *Śārīraka-sūtras,* since the Ātman living in the śarīra or the body is dealt within the work;

(c) The *Uttara-mīmāṁsā-sūtras* (as opposed to the *Pūrva-mīmāṁsā-sūtras*) since it does mīmāṁsā or enquiry into the uttara or latter part of the Vedas;

(d) The *Bhikṣu-sūtras* since it is specially recommended for study by the bhikṣus or the saṁnyāsins.

Bādarāyaṇa, the Author

Nothing is known about Bādarāyaṇa, the author of this celebrated work. Traditionalists identify him with Vyāsa, the author of the *Mahābhārata* and the purāṇas. The work is generally assigned to the period 500 B.C.—200 B.C. by the Indian and some Western scholars. However, there are other scholars who consider the two to be different and assign Bādarāyaṇa to the period A.D. 200.

About the Work

The work *Brahmasūtras* is in four adhyāyas or chapters. Each adhyāya is divided into four pādas or quarters. The pādas comprise adhikaraṇas or topics, each composed of sūtras.

The total number of adhikaraṇas and the sūtras, according to Śaṅkara, the earliest commentator, is 191 and 555 respectively. However, variations are seen in this number as also in the readings themselves. Splitting one sūtra into two, fusing two sūtras into one or adding the last word

of a sūtra to the beginning of the next are some of the reasons for such variations in the readings. Such alterations in the structure of the sūtras have contributed to divergent interpretations also. Not only that, divergent views have also arisen due to one school considering a particular sūtra as stating the pūrvapakṣa (the *prima facie* view, the objection or doubt) and another school accepting the same sūtra as the siddhānta (the theory propounded by the author of the work).

As already stated, each pāda of the various adhyāyas, comprises several adhikaraṇas or topics. An adhikaraṇa needs must have five parts connected in a graded manner. They are:

(1) viṣaya or topic; (2) viśaya or saṁśaya, doubt; (3) pūrvapakṣa or opponent's view; (4) siddhānta or established conclusion and (5) saṅgati or connection between the different sections.

The number of sūtras in any adhikaraṇa depends on the nature of the subject under discussion. Thanks to the ambiguity in the sūtras, the titles and the number of the adhikaraṇas vary from commentator to commentator.

While Nimbārka (13th cent. A. D.) has the minimum number of adhikaraṇas

(151), Madhva (A. D. 1238-1317) has the maximum (223).

The purport of the sūtra itself is determined by the commentators as per the principle of ṣaḍvidhaliṅgas or six characteristic signs. They are: upakrama and upasaṁhāra (the beginning and the end), abhyāsa (repetition), apūrvatā (novelty), phala (objective), arthavāda (eulogy) and upapatti (logicality).

True to its name, the work *Brahmasūtras* deals primarily with Brahman as the highest truth, the only independent truth, by realising which, a person transcends transmigratory existence. The one and only authority for the existence of Brahman as also for its true nature is the Śruti, the jñānakāṇḍa part (section dealing with the knowledge of Brahman/Ātman) of the Vedas comprising the Upaniṣads. This knowledge of Brahman can never be obtained by logic and reasoning which depend upon the puny human intellect. Since the intellect depends upon the knowledge gained by the senses and since Brahman, the pure consciousness that he is, is beyond the ken of the senses, the Śruti as revealed to the ṛṣis is the only source for knowing him.

This takes us to the next point—the various Upaniṣadic statements that form the basis for the philosophy of the *Brahmasūtras*. Since some of these statements appeared to contradict one another, Bādarāyaṇa had to undertake the unenviable task of collating them to weave out a homogeneous philosophy. While doing it, he naturally chose the most ancient of the Upaniṣads. Which are those Upaniṣads, the statements of which, Bādarāyaṇa has discussed in these sūtras? There is no direct indication in the sūtras themselves since they are too laconic. For this we have to depend almost entirely on the bhāṣyakāras or the commentators who fortunately for us, are more or less unanimous in deciphering the same.

In the first 31 adhikaraṇas (as per Śaṅkara) the major statements that form the viṣaya or viṣayavākya (subject-matter) are from the following Upaniṣads, with the number of such sentences noted against them:

Chāndogya (14), *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (5), *Kaṭha* (4), *Taittirīya* (2), *Muṇḍaka* (3), *Praśna* (1) *and Kauṣītaki* (2).

Apart from these, sentences taken from the *Śvetāśvatara*, the *Aitareya* and the *Jābāla* Upaniṣads have also been discussed.

While analysing the purport of the various passages from the Upaniṣads, Bādarāyaṇa has quoted the opinions of other teachers also. They are: Ātreya, Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi, Kārṣṇājani, Kāśakṛtsna, Jaimini and Bādari. Almost all these names appear in the earlier works like the śrautasūtras and the gṛhyasūtras. It is likely that some preceeded Bādarāyaṇa and others like Jaimini might have been his contemporaries. Though he differed from them, he has not criticised their views, probably because they were also Vedāntins of repute, who had accepted the Upaniṣads as the primary authority and Brahman as the highest truth.

A Brief Synopsis

The contents of the work may now be summarised as follows:

First Chapter

The First chapter comprising 134 sūtras in 39 adhikaraṇas has been called *Samanvayādhyāya*, since it attempts to harmonise (samanvaya = harmony) the principles dealt with in the various Upaniṣads.

The work starts with the famous sūtra *athāto brahmajijñāsā* ('Now, therefore, the desire to know

Brahman'). Since the knowledge or experience of Brahman, leads to mokṣa or freedom from transmigration, it is very necessary to have a correct understanding of Brahman. Keeping this in view, the treatise deals with the various statements in the wellknown Upaniṣads concerning Brahman. Brahman is He from whom this world came into existence, in whom it inheres and to whom it returns at the end of a cycle of creation. The only source for the knowledge of this Brahman is the Śruti or the Upaniṣads.

It is Brahman alone who is the ultimate cause of this world and not prakṛti or pradhāna as the Sāṅkhyas aver, since it is insentient. An insentient cause can never think or will and produce such a perfectly designed universe.

This Brahman is ānandamaya, full of bliss. He is transcendent as well as immanent in this world, including the jīvātmas or the individual souls. The being of light that exists in āditya or the sun and our own eyes is also Brahman. He is also designated as ākāśa, prāṇa, bhūmā and akṣara. The being described as 'aṅguṣṭhamātra-puruṣa' (the person of the size of the thumb) is also really Brahman and not the jīva, or the individual soul. So also does the word Ātman refer to him.

Bādarāyaṇa quotes the opinions of Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi and Kāśakṛtsna in the fourth pāda of this chapter. Āśmarathya thinks that the jīvātmas are both different and nondifferent from Brahman (or Paramātman) even as the sparks of fire are both identical with and different from fire. Auḍulomi opines that the jīvas are different from Brahman in the state of bondage but become one with him in the state of liberation. Kāśakṛtsna, however, considers the two to be identical, since it is Brahman that has become the jīva also.

Though the views of these teachers are stated, Bādarāyaṇa does not give his own opinion or preference.

The last part of this chapter asserts that Brahman is both the upādānakāraṇa (material cause) and the nimittakāraṇa (efficient cause) for this world.

Second Chapter

Designated as *Avirodhādhyāya*, this chapter with 157 sūtras distributed among 47 adhikaraṇas applies itself to dispel any virodha or contradiction that may confront this philosophy of Vedānta.

Vedānta is not opposed to smṛti (secondary scriptures like the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Āpastamba-*

dharmasūtras) and tarka (logic and reasoning). The opposition of schools like that of the Sāṅkhya is fallible. There is no contradiction among the various statements in the Upaniṣads dealing with subjects like creation. This is the burden of the teaching of this chapter.

Out of the several non-Vedāntic systems of philosophy that existed during Bādarāyaṇa's time, the Sāṅkhya system was the most powerful. Hence it has been given special attention while refuting the other schools.

One of the important factors discussed here is the relationship between the kāraṇa (the cause) and the kārya (the effect). The Sāṅkhyan view known as 'sat-kāryavāda' states that the kārya or the effect pre-exists (sat = existing) in the kāraṇa or cause. In the process of creation it just gets manifested and is not newly produced, since something real can never be produced from the unreal. On the other hand the Vaiśeṣika school accepts the 'asat-kārya-vāda,' according to which the previously non-existent (= asat) effect is newly produced. In the former case, the effect pre-exists in the upādāna-kāraṇa (the material cause) and in the latter, the nimitta-kāraṇa (the efficient cause) is constant. Bādarāyaṇa accepts these views partially and

declares, on the basis of the Upaniṣads, that Brahman is 'abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa,' both the material and the efficient cause for this world. Hence this world is nondifferent from Brahman. The objection that this world consists of insentient objects and hence cannot be the product of the sentient Brahman does not hold good, since the Śruti, the highest authority in such matters which are beyond the powers of the ordinary human intellect, declares it to be so.

Brahman has no selfish motive in creating this world, since he is self-contented. There is neither partiality nor cruelty in this creation since justice is meted out to the jīvas according to their karmas or deserts. The very purpose of creation of this world is to help the jīvas to attain ānanda or bliss by getting established in Brahman, the Bliss-Absolute.

Apart from the Sāṅkhya school, the other schools like those of the Vaiśeṣikas, the Buddhists, the Jainas, the Pāśupatas and the Bhāgavatas like the Pāñcarātras have also been critically examined and dismissed.

Third Chapter

The third chapter is called *Sādhanādhyāya* and is the longest, with 186 sūtras spread over 67

adhikaraṇas. Though called thus, the topics discussed are diverse. They are: transmigration of the jīva into other bodies, dream-creations of the jīva, its experiencing the deserts of karma by the will of Īśvara or God, various vidyās or meditations mentioned in the Upaniṣads and clarifications regarding them, collating of a vidyā when described differently in different Upaniṣads, knowledge of the Ātman or Brahman as independent of karmas or rituals, certain clarifications regarding the rituals and duties prescribed for the various āśramas (stages of life like brahmacarya or sannyāsa) as also prāyaścittas (expiations) and so on.

Fourth Chapter

Known as *Phalādhyāya* this chapter is the shortest with only 78 sūtras and 38 adhikaraṇas. The main topic discussed is the journey of the jīva after death to Brahmaloka by the 'arcirādimārga' or 'devayāna', the path of light or of gods.

One who is interested in mokṣa or liberation has to practise śravaṇa (listening to the scriptures describing the nature of Ātman/Brahman) and allied disciplines until realisation. The various upāsanās or meditations described in the Upaniṣads aid the jīva in the process of attaining mokṣa. On

attaining brahmajñāna or knowledge of Brahman, sañcita-karma (karma accumulated over several lives) gets destroyed. Āgāmī-karma, karma done after realisation, is rendered fruitless. The prārabdha-karma, the karma that has already started this body and yielding results has to be exhausted only by experiencing it.

The jīvas who have practised severe spiritual disciplines like tapas (austerity), śraddhā (devoted faith) and brahmacarya (celibacy), as also vidyās like meditation on Brahman will travel, after death, by the arcirādimārga or the path of light comprising light, day, bright-fortnight and so on, and reach the Brahmaloka from which there is no return. There are divine guides called 'ātivāhikas' who take the jīva through the various stations of light to the Brahmaloka.

Anomalies in the descriptions concerning the details of the arcirādimārga have been set right through proper interpretations and arguments.

The work ends with the declaration, *anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*, repeated twice for emphasis, ('There is no return, since the scriptures declare so') meaning that the jīva reaching the Brahmaloka will not return to this mundane existence. Descriptions of

the nature of the muktapuruṣa, the liberated soul, are given at the appropriate places. The views of Jaimini, Auḍulomi and Bādari in this regard have also been cited.

The Philosophy of Bādarāyaṇa

Bādarāyaṇa wrote the *Brahmasūtras* to systematise the teachings of the Upaniṣads into a coherent philosophy. However, since the sūtras are short and terse, it becomes quite a job to find out what exactly is his own philosophy as revealed through this work. Even so, with the help of the sūtras which seem to be more unambiguous than the others, an attempt may now be made to portray the same.

The one and only pramāṇa (source of knowledge) that Bādarāyaṇa accepts while expounding the Vedānta system is the Śruti or the Vedas, especially the *Jñānakāṇḍa* part of it, viz., the Upaniṣads. He considers the words of the Vedas as nitya or eternal. Logic and reasoning, which can always be unsettled by superior ones, can never be relied upon in determining the transcendental truths like the ultimate cause of the world. Smṛtis or secondary scriptures like the *Manusmṛti* and the *Mahābhārata* including the *Bhagavadgītā* can

also be depended upon in so far as they do not contradict the śruti.

The śruti declares Brahman as the origin of this universe, the primary, nay, the only truth. In fact, the very definition (*janmādyasya yataḥ*, 1.1.2) makes him the uncaused cause, the ground of sustenance and involution of the world. He is both the material and the efficient cause for the world. He needs no external implements or assistance and can transform himself even as milk is transformed into its products.

He evolves himself into ākāśa (ether), vāyu (air) and other products by willing the same; and, he is associated with every stage of creation up to the last.

Since it is Brahman that has evolved into this world, this world is non-different from him, even as an unfolded cloth is nondifferent from the same which was earlier folded.

The activity of creation is a līlā or effortless sport for Brahman. But, since it is done as per the karmas of the unredeemed jīvas, one should not attribute partiality or cruelty to him, seeing the good and evil that exist here.

As regards the jīva or the individual soul, Bādarāyaṇa defines him as a 'jña' or knower, a

being endowed with consciousness. He has no birth or death. He is eternal and atomic in size. Whether the jīva is an aṁśa (part) of Brahman or his ābhāsa (reflection) has not been stated clearly though the views of other Vedāntins like Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi and Kāśakṛtsna have been given.

The relationship between the jīva and Brahman has been likened to the snake and its coiled-up state or light and its source. Thus the question whether they are different or identical has been left unanswered.

By meditation on Ātman/Brahman leading to jñāna, or experience of the same, the jīva attains liberation. The Śrutis give equal importance to the performance of karma or prescribed actions and tyāga or renunciation of the same, though the performance of duties prescribed for the respective āśramas (stages of life) has been stressed even for the spiritual aspirant. The fruits of the various upāsanās or meditations practised by a jīva accrue to him by the grace of Īśvara (Brahman as the ruler of the created world).

On attaining the knowledge of Brahman, all the sañcita-karma (accumulated past karma) of the jīva will be destroyed. He will live as long as the

prārabdha-karma (karma already fructified) lasts. But, the karma done after attaining knowledge will not affect him.

The jīva who has reached the acme of meditation while living, will, after death, travel by the arcirādimārga or devayāna (the path of light or of the gods) and reach Brahmaloka from which there is no return to this world. There, he will be one with Brahman, non-different from him. The various attributes predicated of Brahman get manifested in the liberated jīva. Caitanya or consciousness, being his essential nature, is of course, always there.

In conclusion it can be affirmed that Bādarāyaṇa, in these sūtras, teaches a kind of advaita (Brahmādvaita?). He does not admit the existence of either the jīvas or the world, as independent of, or different from, Brahman. Since he has accepted the Upaniṣads as the supreme authority and since the other teachers like Bādari whom he has quoted, also did the same, he has not contradicted them. Both the views—that Brahman is nirviśeṣa-cinmātra-svarūpa (pure consciousness without any attributes) and saviśeṣa (with attributes)—seem to be acceptable to him. Obviously he has tried to reconcile the various,

apparently conflicting, views expressed in the Upaniṣads and explain them rather than formulate his own philosophy.

The Commentators and Their Works

The Vedas have been the foundation of Hindu religion and culture for millennia. The philosophy of Vedānta based on the Upaniṣads has held sway over the intelligentsia for centuries. Hence, it is but natural that the *Brahmasūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa has attracted the attention of the distinguished scholars over the years, who have enriched the Vedānta literature by their brilliant expositions. All these commentators have evinced great respect for Bādarāyaṇa and his monumental work. They have tried to critically examine all the other schools that were important during their days and to prove the superiority of the Vedānta over them. Of course, they were equally keen to establish their own school of Vedānta also.

Of the several bhāṣyas or commentaries available to us today, that of Śaṅkara is the earliest. There might have been quite a few bhāṣyas composed by the earlier writers. It can, however, be stated with certainty that Upavarṣa, to whom Śaṅkara refers in his commentary (1.3.28; 3.3.53)

must have been one such. Bodhāyana, another commentator, referred to as 'Vṛttikāra' by Rāmānuja, is sometimes identified with this Upavarṣa though there is no unanimity regarding it.

The following list of commentators who have left bhāṣyas directly on the *Brahmasūtras* may be useful to the students of Vedānta philosophy:

Bhāṣyakāra	Period	School of Vedānta
1. Śaṅkara	A. D. 788-820	Advaita
2. Bhāskara	A. D. 996-1061	Bhedābheda
3. Yādavaprakāśa	A. D. 1000	Bhedābheda
4. Rāmānuja	A. D. 1017-1127	Viśiṣṭādvaita
5. Madhva	A. D. 1238-1317	Dvaita
6. Nimbārka	Latter half of 13th century	Dvaitādvaita
7. Śrīkaṇṭha	A. D. 1270	Śaiva-Viśiṣṭādvaita
8. Śrīpati	A. D. 1400	Bhedābhedātmaka viśiṣṭādvaita
9. Vallabha	A. D. 1479-1544	Śuddhādvaita
10. Śuka	A. D. 1550	Bhedavāda
11. Vijñānabhikṣu	A. D. 1550	Ātma-brahmaikya bhedavāda

12.Baladeva	A. D. 1725	Acintya-bhedābheda

A brief summary of the more important of these schools may now be given. Since the schools propounded by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva are more wellknown and gained precedence over the other, they will be taken up first.

ŚAṄKARA

Śaṅkara's darśana or philosophy as revealed in his bhāṣyas on the *Bhagavadgītā,* the ten ancient Upaniṣads and the *Brahmasūtras* is now wellknown as Advaita Vedānta. The oft-quoted and famous verse '*brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*' ('Brahman alone is real; this world is only an illusory appearance. The jīva is verily Brahman and is not different from him.') gives this philosophy in a nutshell.

Śaṅkara categorises Brahman into two aspects: Para-brahman and Apara-brahman. Where the Upaniṣadic statements deny all limiting adjuncts like name and form, created by avidyā or ignorance of his essential nature to Brahman, he is Para, the higher, Brahman. On the other hand, where these statements describe him as

endowed with name, form and several attributes, it is the Apara or the lower, Brahman that is referred to. It is the latter that is the cause for the creation of this world, its sustenance and its dissolution.

Really speaking, Brahman does not get transformed into this world. The multiplicity of names and forms is only a 'vivarta,' an appearance, due to avidyā or ignorance, even as a snake is perceived in a rope in insufficient light. This, he calls as 'adhyāsa' or 'adhyāropa' (superimposition). Through vidyā or discriminative knowledge, 'apavāda' or desuper-imposition takes place, giving the true knowledge of the reality.

Śaṅkara considers the jīvas as caitanya or pure consciousness, but, circumscribed by the antaḥkaraṇa (the 'inner organ' or mind). The jīva, though nitya (eternal), śuddha (pure), buddha (awakened), and mukta (free), appears as kartā (the doer) and bhoktā (the experiencer) due to the limitation imposed by the antaḥkaraṇa.

The Upaniṣadic sentences like '*tat tvam asi*' teach the essential identity between the jīva and Brahman, as pure consciousness, after eliminating their adventitious qualities

Śaṅkara does accept kramamukti or gradual liberation of the jīva after death, by travelling through the devayāna, to Brahmaloka, as described in the Upaniṣads and the Brahmasūtras. However, he is emphatic about sadyomukti or instant liberation, here and now, simultaneously with the rising of jñāna or knowledge. Such a mukti is also called jīvanmukti, liberation even while living.

RĀMĀNUJA

Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* is known as *Śrībhāṣya*. Apart from this, he has also composed two more smaller works on the *Brahmasūtras*, the *Vedāntadīpa* and the *Vedāntasāra*. The former, being a later work, contains some additional explanations.

Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya* is stated to follow in the footsteps of the more detailed *Bodhāyanavṛtti* as also the works of some earlier Vedāntins like Brahmanandī and Dramiḍācārya whose works are not available now.

Rāmānuja accepts Brahman as the highest and independent reality. However, Brahman includes in himself cit (the sentient beings, the jīvas) and acit (the insentient prakṛti or nature). These two are also real, but under the absolute control of

Brahman. Brahman—also called Īśvara by him—includes them, is immanent in them and also transcends them. Hence, Rāmānuja's system is called 'Viśiṣṭādvaita,' advaita or nonduality of Brahman, the Absolute, but 'viśiṣṭa' or qualified by cit and acit. It is similar to a tree with branches, leaves and fruits. Though the tree is 'one,' it has internal parts, each part being different from the other parts, the tree itself, however, always remaining as one.

To Rāmānuja, Brahman is the Supreme Person (sarveśvara) who is the ruler of all. He is antagonistic to all evil. He possesses infinite auspicious qualities. He is omniscient, and omnipotent. The creation, subsistance and reabsorption of this world proceed from him.

Rāmānuja considers the jīva or the individual soul as the spirit different from the body, atomic in size and endowed with jñāna or consciousness which contracts or expands. He has a free will. And, the jīvas are infinite in number. Some jīvas called 'nityas' are ever free. Others who are now 'baddha' or bound, can attain mukti through bhakti and prapatti (devotion and surrender) and the grace of God. All the liberated jīvas are

similar in nature. Spiritual life starts with the performance of the prescribed karmas in the right spirit leading to the purification of the mind. Such a pure jīva becomes fit to practise jñāna and experience his separateness from the body-mind complex. However, it is through bhakti and prapatti that he ultimately attains Brahman through the devayāna and becomes free.

MADHVA

A thorough-going dualist, Madhva has composed 37 works which collectively go by the name *Sarvamūla*. The short and terse bhāṣya on the *Brahmasūtras*, the *Aṇubhāṣya* a brief treatise on the same in verses, *Nyāyavivaraṇa* and the *Anuvyākhyāna* are the four works on the sūtraprasthāna. His is a philosophy of realism and a monotheistic theology centering on devotion to Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa.

According to him Brahman, identified with Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa) is the independent reality. Prakṛti or matter, and the jīvas or souls who are atomic and infinite in number, are coeval realities but entirely dependent on him. Brahman is essentially knowledge and bliss. Though his infinite personality is beyond our conception, out of

grace for us, he can take forms which are neither material nor finite.

Madhva proclaims the theory of pañcabhedas or five eternal differences between Brahman and the jīvas, Brahman and prakṛti, jīvas and prakṛti, jīva and jīva and, various objects of prakṛti.

He categorises the jīvas into three groups: muktiyogyas, nityasaṁsārins and tamoyogyas. The first group is capable of attaining mukti or liberation. The second group, being interested only in the crass pleasure of the world and not a whit in moral regeneration or spiritual elevation, eternally goes through the rounds of births and deaths. The third group of jīvas, the damned sinners that they are, degenerates into lower births and suffers in hell.

The jīvas get liberation through bhakti and the grace of God. In the state of liberation they are not only freed from suffering but also enjoy positive bliss. Differences among the jīvas, however, persist even in the state of liberation.

BHĀSKARA

Bhāskara is the trail-blazer for the post-Śaṅkara schools of Vedānta which did not agree with Śaṅkara's brand of advaita based on māyāvāda,

the theory of the unreality of this world. He is a strict Vedāntin in the sense that he takes his stand on the Upaniṣads and the *Brahmasūtras*. His commentary on the latter expounds his philosophy.

Bhāskara advocates the acceptance of the direct meaning of all the passages of the Upaniṣads without any distinction. He presents a Brahman who has innumerable auspicious attributes, but, without any particular form. He has a twofold power—the bhoktṣśakti (the power of the enjoyer) and the bhogyaśakti (the power of the enjoyed). Using these two powers he transforms himself into the acetana or insentient objects and the jīvas or the sentient souls. Though this transformation is real, it does not affect him in any way. The jīvas in their essential nature are one with Brahman, but get differentiated from him in the state of bondage due to the upādhis, or limiting adjuncts—the bodies and minds—which are real. These upādhis, though real, are not nitya or eternal. They are to be considered as real since they are actually experienced. But, in the state of liberation, they become one with Brahman even as the rivers flowing into the ocean become one with it.

Bhāskara considers this world as the kāryarūpa or effect, of Brahman and hence real.

As regards the sādhanā, Bhāskara recommends performance of scripture-ordained duties without any desire for their fruits and the practice of meditation on Brahman as also the jīva's oneness with him. Since he does not accept a Personal God, there is no place for divine grace in his system.

NIMBĀRKA

Nimbārka's Dvaitādvaita is very similar to the Bhedābheda of Bhāskara. However, being a firm believer in Brahman with form and attributes and the path of devotion, his philosophy is more akin to that of Rāmānuja.

Nimbārka's main work is *Vedānta-pārijāta-saurabha* which is his commentary on the Brahmasūtras. It is rather brief but lucid, since he avoids the dialectical methods or a flowery style.

According to him there are three equally real and co-eternal tattvas or principles: Brahman, cit and acit. While Brahman is the controller or niyantṛ, cit (the sentient being, the jīva or the soul) is the enjoyer, bhoktṛ, and acit (the insentient nature, prakṛti) is the enjoyed, bhogya.

Acit is of three kinds: prākṛta or what is derived from prakṛti or primal matter; aprākṛta or

what is not derived from prakṛti, but derived from a non-material substance of which the world of Brahman is made and, kāla or time.

They are different from one another in their svarūpa or nature. But the cit and the acit are paratantra-tattvas, dependent realities.

Nimbārka adopts the view that the bheda (difference) and the abheda (non-difference) are both equally real. They coexist but do not contradict each other. It is something like the relationship between the sea and its waves or the sun and its rays. Cit and acit, the souls and the universe, exist in Brahman from all eternity and never get separated from him whether in the causal state or when manifested.

They retain their individuality even during salvation, or dissolution of the universe.

Brahman is personal, possesses a celestial body, full of exquisite beauty and grace. Nimbārka identifies him with Kṛṣṇa and posits Rādhā as his Śakti or consort even as Rāmānuja accepts Lakṣmī as the consort of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa.

Brahman is omniscient, the cause of the origin, sustenance and distruction of the universe. He is all-powerful and yet all-merciful. He is gracious

to his devotees and helps them have a direct vision of himself.

The jīvas are atomic and infinite in number. Each of them is a distinctive agent, a jñatṛ (knower), kartṛ (doer) and bhoktṛ (enjoyer) of the karmas he does. They animate the body they live in, even as a small lamp kept in a room lights up the whole room.

There are three destinies for the jīvas—naraka or hell for the sinners, svarga or heaven for the virtuous and apavarga or release for the enlightened ones. Apavarga is attaining the world of Brahman from which there is no return.

Constant meditation on Brahman as the inmost self of the jīva or the individual soul is the means of attaining Brahman in Brahmaloka. There he has brahma-svarūpa-lābha, becomes similar to him in nature, except for the power of creation.

The other sādhanās recommended are: scripture-ordained work, knowledge, devotion and surrender to God, as also strict obedience to the spiritual teacher.

VALLABHA

Vallabha's philosophy is known as Śuddhādvaita. He is said to have written two

commentaries on the *Brahmasūtras*, the *Bṛhadbhāṣya* and the *Aṇubhāṣya*, of which the former is not available now. The latter is up to the 33rd sūtra of the second pāda of the third adhyāya (3.2.33) only. The book was completed by his son Viṭṭhalanātha. Apart from the prasthānatraya, he holds the *Bhāgavata* in very high esteem. He wrote a commentary on it also, called *Subodhinī*, which too remained incomplete.

For Vallabha, God the Absolute is Kṛṣṇa whom the Upaniṣads call 'Brahman'. He is one without a second and is sat-cit-ānanda, (being, awareness and bliss). He has three forms: Parabrahman, Puruṣottama or Kṛṣṇa; Antaryāmin, the indwelling spirit of all the living beings, and Akṣarabrahman which is the object of meditation and the abode of Kṛṣṇa. It is this Akṣara that appears as prakṛti (insentient nature, the matrix of all created objects) and puruṣa (sentient soul, the jīva), but is beyond both. While Puruṣottama is the highest, Akṣara is an expression of his.

This Akṣara, again, appears in three more forms: kāla (time), karma (action) and svabhāva (nature).

Kāla or time is suprasensible and is inferred from its effects. It is all-pervasive and the support

of all beings. Karma or action is also universal. It manifests itself as different actions of different beings. Svabhāva or nature is that which produces pariṇāma or change.

God is both saguṇa and nirguṇa (with and without attributes). He cannot be known except through his own grace. Through his māyāśakti, he can become anything at any time. He is both the material and the efficient cause of this world. He creates the world through his own nature and hence the samavāyi-kāraṇa, the inherent cause. Though he exists everywhere in his tripartite nature as being, consciousness and bliss, their manifestation in the created universe differs. Matter reflects only the being aspect ('sat'), the souls reflect the consciousness aspect also ('cit') whereas as Brahman, he manifests all the three fully.

Though unmanifest and transcendent in his own nature, by creating the world through his will, he becomes manifest and an object of comprehension. Since this world is a manifestation of Brahman, it is never destroyed but is only withdrawn into him at his will.

The jīvas or individual souls come out of Akṣara-Brahman like sparks from fire. They are

eternal parts of Brahman and are atomic in size. They are of three classes: puṣṭi, maryāda and pravāha. The first are the chosen ones enjoying the grace of God, and ardently devoted to him. The second study the scriptures, perform the rites prescribed as ordained duties and also cultivate devotion. They attain God in course of time. The last are interested only in the worldly life and hence transmigrate constantly. Some of them, due to satsaṅga or good company, may attain God later.

Vallabha considers bhakti or devotion as the only means of salvation. By that, the jīva is released from the cycle of birth and death and enjoys the bliss of God in all possible ways.

Vallabha holds that the knower of Brahman is absorbed in Akṣara-Brahman and *not* in Puruṣottama. It is only through bhakti that the latter, the highest aspect, can be attained.

He advocates two forms of bhakti: maryādābhakti and puṣṭi-bhakti. The former is formal devotion to be practised as described in the scriptures and has to be cultivated by self-effort. The latter is attained by the grace of God alone, without one's effort. 'Puṣṭi' refers, not to the

physical nourishment, but to the spiritual nourishment got by the grace of God. Hence the name 'Puṣṭi-bhakti'. Consequently, Vallabha's system is also called 'Puṣṭi-mārga'. Emphasis on the worship of Bālakṛṣṇa, (child Kṛṣṇa) and sevā or service to him, find an important place in the mode of sādhanā taught by him.

BALADEVA

Baladeva is an important teacher of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism developed by Śrīkṛṣṇa Caitanya (A. D. 1485-1533). The philosophy of this school is known as Acintya-bhedābheda. *Govindabhāṣya* is his commentary on the Brahmasūtras, *Siddhāntaratna* being another work that expounds this philosophy. This school, though deeply indebted to the Dvaita system of Madhva, also differs from it.

According to this school of thought, Brahman the highest reality is Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu or Hari. He is the Personal God possessed of infinite auspicious qualities, which are 'acintya' or beyond our comprehension. He is 'nirguṇa' only in the sense that he is beyond the three guṇas of sattva, rajas and tamas. The scriptures are the only authority to reveal him.

God has three powers: parāśakti (higher power), aparāśakti (lower power) and avidyāśakti (nescience-power). Through the first, he becomes the efficient cause, and, through the other two, the material cause. When the latter two powers are manifested in gross forms, the universe of souls and matter arises.

Creation of the world is a spontaneous act of the Lord. However, he does it as per the karmas of the individual souls.

The individual soul is eternal. It is both knowledge and knower, an enjoyer and an active agent, though not independent. It is atomic in size.

Bhakti is the sole and direct cause of salvation. Though dhyāna or upāsanā (meditation) is one form of bhakti, it is through premābhakti (intense devotion) that God can be realised. Performance of duties purifies the mind. Study of the scriptures is an aid in the path of sādhanā. However, it is ultimately by the grace of God alone that he can be realised and salvation attained. The freed soul resides in the same world as the lord and in his proximity, attains his nature and attributes. However, it retains its separate identity.

Baladeva does not admit of jīvanmukti or liberation while living in the body here.

The Brahmasūtra Literature

Being the basic text of Vedānta, both in its metaphysical and in its dialectical aspect, the *Brahmasūtras* has attracted the attention of a host of elite scholars over the centuries. Apart from the direct bhāṣyas by the great ācāryas, several sub-commentaries and glosses over them have enriched the Brahmasūtra literature. In such literature now available to us, the maximum number of works belong to the Advaita school.

On the Śaṅkarabhāṣya, three ṭīkās or sub-commentaries are available in full: *Bhāmatī* of Vācaspatimiśra (A. D. 840), *Nyāyanirṇaya* of Ānandagiri (A. D. 1260) and *Ratnaprabhā* of Rāmānanda (17th cent.)

The one by Padmapāda (A. D. 820), a direct disciple of Śaṅkara, called *Pañcapādikā* deals with the first four sūtras (1.1.1-4) only. This was commented upon by Prakāśātman (A. D. 1200) in his *Pañcapādikā-vivaraṇam*. There is a gloss on this called *Tattvadīpanam* by Akhaṇḍānanda Muni (A. D. 1350). All these commentaries collectively,

have created the *Vivaraṇa-prasthāna*, a special school of Advaita Vedānta, in the post-Śaṅkara period.

As opposed to this, the *Bhāmatī-prasthāna* was developed by Amalānanda (13th cent. A. D.) in his *Kalpataru* on the *Bhāmatī* and Appayya-dīkṣita (16th cent. A. D.) in his *Parimalā*, on this *Kalpataru*.

Mention may also be made of a few other works on the *Brahmasūtras*, considered to be more important than others: *Saṅkṣepa-śārīrakam* of Sarvajñātma Muni (A. D. 900), *Vivaraṇa-prameya* of Vidyāraṇya (A. D. 1350), *Brahmasūtra-dīpikā* of Śaṅkarānanda (14th cent. A. D.) and *Brahmatattva-prakāśikā* of Sadāśiva-brahmendra (18th cent. A. D.)

Comparatively speaking, the Brahmasūtra literature of the other schools of Vedānta, is not so voluminous though it is in no way inferior in its quality and erudition.

After creating his *magnum opus*, the *Śrībhāṣya*, Rāmānuja wrote two more treatises on the *Brahmasūtras* entitled *Vedāntadīpa* and *Vedāntasāra*. The *Śrībhāṣya* has only one ancient commentary, the *Śrutaprakāśikā* of Sudarśanasūri (13th cent. A. D.). On this, Vedānta-deśika

(A. D. 1268-1369) wrote a gloss called *Tattvaṭīkā*.

Apart from his bhāṣya (generally called the Madhva-bhāṣya) on the *Brahmasūtras*, Madhva wrote the *Aṇubhāṣya* in verses, giving the gist of the various adhikaraṇas of the work. Rāghavendratīrtha (A. D. 1598-1671) has written an extensive commentary on this and has named it *Tattvamañjarī*.

Trivikrama Paṇḍita, a disciple of Madhva, has commented upon the bhāṣya of Madhva. It is called the *Tattvadīpikā*. *Tattvaprakāśikā* of Jayatīrtha (A. D. 1365-1388) and *Tātparya-candrikā* of Vyāsarāya (A. D. 1481) are the other commentaries on the same.

However, the most celebrated work of the Dvaita school of Madhva is the *Nyāyasudhā* of Jayatīrtha which is a highly dialectical and yet lucid commentary on Madhva's *Anuvyākhyāna*, a work elucidating his own commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*.

Nimbārka's commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, known as the *Vedānta-pārijāta-saurabha*, has been expounded further by Srīnivāsa (13th cent. A. D.) in his *Vedānta-kaustubha* which again has been

explained further by Keśava Kāśmīrin (15th cent. A. D.) in his Vedānta-kaustubha-prabhā.

The other commentaries which have drawn the attention of the Vedāntic scholars are the Vijñānāmṛta-bhāṣya of Vijñānabhikṣu (A. D. 1550) and the commentary Sūkṣma on Baladeva's Govindabhāṣya.

Apart from these works mentioned here, there are several other treatises and tracts on the various aspects of Vedānta as interpreted by the numerous schools.

Conclusion

There is no gainsaying the fact that the Vedānta system based chiefly on the Brahmasūtras which itself is a systematic exposition of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads—has influenced all the important aspects of Hindu religion and culture, including the modern Hindu movements.

Recognition of the presence of human suffering was the starting point for all the systems. Attainment of a state of total freedom from misery called liberation was the final goal.

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